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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to assess the educational needs of Wisconsin adults aged 16 years and older who had not graduated from and were not attending high school or had not received a high school equivalency credential. The project staff interviewed 1,680 Wisconsin residents who met these criteria by telephone, using computerized random digit dialing. Results were compiled in the form of frequency analysis and cross tabulations. The following conclusions were reached, with recommendations for adult basic education (ABE) programming to meet the needs uncovered. (1) Persons in the 16-25-year-olds age range are the most cost effective target for ABE recruitment and programming; however, competing demands on their time make flexible scheduling, innovative approaches, and televised instruction a wise course. (2) Teachers should understand the needs of 16-25-year-olds; and more emphasis should be placed on preparation for high school equivalency. (3) The needs of older adults might be met through association with churches. (4) ABE's concentration on basic skills is needed and should continue. (5) The ABE program should make greater use of family and friends to teach persons who need the skills. (6) Newspapers, magazines, and books should be used as instructional materials. (7) Instructional units in the completion of various forms should be used. (8) Marketing of the program will have to become more selective and more sophisticated. (9) Special needs of minority groups will have to be met in increasing numbers. (10) ABE programs should be integrated into other adult educational activities and with vocational programs to better serve the population's needs. (KC)

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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR WISCONSIN ADULTS WITH LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OR GED

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PREFACE

The needs assessment reported here had a basis in previous investigations involving the cooperation of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education.

The State of the Art in Adult Basic Education completed in 1978 was the base for the development of a three-year state plan for the Adult Education Act in Wisconsin (1979-1981). In developing this three-year plan it became clear that although much information was available from the VTAE Districts on those participating in the program, practically nothing other than broad categories of census data were available on those much larger numbers of adults without a high school diploma and not enrolled in any program to achieve one.

Suggestions on how to reach this larger group with programs was based more on hunch than on data. The data were needed. While about 16,000 were enrolled each year, the pool of eligibles was over one million.

In 1978 a project was completed which was designed to identify a means of reaching this larger "low-literate" population. The result was a decision that more valid data could be achieved by a random selection and screening methodology with follow-up telephone interviews. In a pilot interview program 72% of the eligibles could be interviewed by phone and only 47% could be reached by direct person-to-person interview.

A statewide random sample of 1680 persons sixteen years of age or older, not in school and not having achieved a high school diploma or its equivalency, were interviewed. This report is based on that sample.

Burton W. Kreitlow

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR WISCONSIN ADULTS

WITH LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL

GRADUATION OR GED

PROJECT REPORT

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CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW

The importance of basic educational attainment in general, and the high school diploma in particular, has long been recognized. As A. L. Ferris has suggested: "A central value of American culture holds that education is a good thing . . . . It is the avenue to upward occupational and social mobility and a primary means for advancing social justice."[1] In spite of a widely held belief in the value of education, there are over 57 million adults in the nation who have not graduated from high school. In the state of Wisconsin there are over one million individuals who lack this most basic educational credential. The concern for those who had not attained basic educational skills was manifested in the middle 1960s with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act. This act and the Adult Education Act of 1966 made available federal monies to "expand basic education programs for adults to enable them to . . . improve their basic education in preparation for occupational training and more profitable employment, and to become more productive and responsible citizens."[2] The program, called Adult Basic Education (ABE), was given federal funding based upon the percentage of eligible recipients in each state, defined as those not in school and without a high school diploma. The basic statistics of funding and enrollment in ABE are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FUNDING PROVIDED AND THE ENROLLMENT IN ABE PROGRAMS IN THE U.S. BETWEEN 1965 AND 1979

Year	Funding (in thousands)	Enrollment
1965	$16,612	37,991
1966	19,679	377,660
1967	26,280	388,935
1968	30,590	455,730
1969	36,000	484,626
1970	40,000	535,613
1971	44,875	620,922
1972	51,134	820,514
1973	54,834	822,469
1974	60,286	965,116
1975	67,500	1,221,210
1976	67,500	1,651,094
1977	71,500	1,686,276
1978	80,500	1,700,000
1979	90,750	(estimated)

SOURCE: U.S. Adult Basic Education Program Statistics, NCES, DHEW, Publications No. (OE) 72-22 and (OE) 74-11413, No. (OE) 78 - unpublished.

In Wisconsin, recent enrollment figures are presented in Table 2 and range from just over 8,000 in 1974 to over 16,000 in 1979.

TABLE 2

ENROLLMENT IN WISCONSIN ABE/GED[3] PROGRAMS 1974-1979

Year	Enrollment
1974	8,234
1975	10,193
1976	12,693
1977	14,157
1978	14.259
1979	16,158

Adult Basic Education has three levels of instruction which are designed for individuals who test in grade levels 0-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Those completing the ABE program have the option of taking the five-part General Educational

Development test, the passing of which enables them to obtain a high school equivalency degree. In this way, ABE is designed to increase basic educational skills and to legitimize such achievement with the issuance of a certified educational credential.

In Wisconsin the ABE program has been administered through the Vocational, Technical and Adult Education districts under the supervision of the State Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education. The objectives of the program are to provide instruction to adults in need of:

1. basic skills for entrance into vocational-technical programs,
2. basic skills while enrolled in vocational-technical programs,
3. basic skills to become employable or upgrade existing employment,
4. basic skills to complete a high school education or its equivalent,
5. basic skills in order to function in society, or
6. English language skills in order to communicate in all aspects of life.[4]

During the course of the development and expansion of the ABE program, a multitude of data was collected on ABE participants, including demographic characteristics, goals, achievements, persistence, and educational needs and learning preferences. Until recently, however, a similar assessment had not been completed for the population as a whole. Since the majority of the ABE eligible population are non-attenders, an adequate understanding of this group's educational needs is important if ABE is to attract and retain the widest possible clientele base.

Four states have so far completed an expanded educational needs assessment: Ohio, New York, California, and, with the publication of this study, Wisconsin. The Wisconsin study involved a random sample, stratified by VTAE districts of 1680 "Wisconsin adults sixteen years of age and older who have not graduated from, and are presently attending, high school." The study was a cooperative effort of the State Board of VTAE, the Department of Continuing

and Vocational Education, the Survey Research Laboratory and the Vocational Studies Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

CHAPTER II: PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to assess the educational needs of Wisconsin adults aged 16 years and older who had not graduated from and were not presently attending high school or had not received a high school equivalency credential. Educational needs can be viewed as a deficit or a gap that exists between present levels of educational skill and attainment and what is desirable to function adequately in the society. The construct "adequate functioning" can be viewed from two perspectives: from the point of view of the individual, and from the point of view of the society. The present study looked at adequate functioning from both perspectives since each is important in a comprehensive understanding of educational needs. This approach translated into the following guidelines for the project objectives:

1) To measure key indicators of the respondents' educational skills and general level of functioning. The social indicator research methodology developed by Raymond Bauer, Albert Biderman, F. M. Andrews and others provided the theoretical basis for this assessment. Andrews defined social indicator research as "a rational empirical basis for measuring perceived quality of life at any of several different levels of broadness, generality and abstraction."[5] Biderman defined the construct social indicators as "quantitative data that serve as indexes to socially important conditions of the society."[6] Within the framework of this methodology, the needs assessment was designed to obtain selected quantitative indicators of the respondents' educational skills and general level of functioning in the community.

2) To assess the respondents' beliefs about the adequacy of their educational skill and attainment. In other words, do they see further education as being necessary or of use in their present circumstances? If they do, what kinds of educational experiences are viewed as desirable, and if not, why is education not perceived as a viable option?

3) To compile a composite demographic description of the sample. These data were used for correlational analysis. A significant interaction was hypothesized between variables like "age" and "sex" on the one hand, and variables like "educational skill level," "social integration," and "attitude toward education" on the other.

The above guidelines were utilized to develop the following specific project objectives:

Objective 1. To develop a demographic description of potential ABE students

a. age
b. education
c. race
d. income
e. other items - sex, location, marital status, employment, physical handicaps, etc.

Objective 2. To summarize the educational skills of potential ABE students

a. reading skills
b. math skills
c. English language proficiency

Objective 3. To obtain an indication of the general level of functioning of potential ABE students

a. social integration
b. leisure
c. work roles
d. life problems and coping strategies

Objective 4. To summarize factors relevant to enrollment and retention of potential ABE students

a. knowledge of and future plans regarding adult classes
b. level of education and other selected variables related to enrollment
c. age and other variables related to ways respondents found out about adult classes

d. difficulty in completing forms and other variables related to subjects respondents would like to learn
e. desired learning formats
f. barriers to enrollment

Objective 5. To analyze the interaction of selected indicators of social functioning, educational skills, and attitude toward work and education

a. age, sex, race, population base and level of education with choice of subject
b. level of education with interest in ABE/GED and lack of interest in adult subjects
c. TV viewing patterns and subject choices
d. assistance of school-age children and other factors with interest in adult classes
e. employment and job stability with interest in adult subjects
f. income and intent to enroll in adult classes

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

In order to meet the objectives of the study, an educational needs assessment survey instrument was developed by the project staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Advisory Committee of the State Board of VTAE. The survey instrument was extensively pretested and later refined for use in the present study. The final version of the survey was administered by the Wisconsin Survey Research Lab. Since it was found that 72% of the eligibles could be reached by telephone, whereas only 47% could be reached by direct person-to-person contact, the telephone was used to administer the needs assessment. A random sample, stratified by VTAE districts, was contacted using computerized random digit dialing. Sixteen hundred and eighty adults aged 16 years and older who had not graduated from, and were not attending, high school completed the needs assessment.

In order to assure the highest possible response rate and to minimize sampling bias, the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) pursued each randomly selected telephone number until one of three possible events occurred: (1) it was firmly established that there were no eligible respondents at the residence; (2) at least two individuals at the residence refused to respond to the initial screening questions; or (3) a completed interview had taken place. In the latter instance, if two or more of the residents were eligible, then a respondent was chosen by random selection according to age. This method was used to further minimize sampling bias.

The results of the needs assessment were compiled by the SRL in the form of a frequency analysis. Further statistical analysis, including cross-tabulations and histograms, were completed by the project staff.

Validation of the design for data analysis made use of "the process of elaboration" developed by Morris Rosenberg. In The Logic of Survey Analysis,

Rosenberg outlined a comprehensive system for validating the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Rosenberg called this system "the process of elaboration." Elaboration involves "the introduction of a third variable called a test factor into the analysis . . . . The aim is to determine whether the relationship between X (the independent variable) and Y (the dependent variable) is due to Z (the test factor)."[7] For example, if community size were the independent variable and knowledge of adult classes were the dependent variable, then possible test factors would include age, sex, race, etc. The addition of these variables acts to "test" whatever relationship might be found between community size and knowledge of adult classes. To quote Fred Kerlinger "the goal of this kind of methodology is to control the independent variables so that extraneous and unwanted sources of systematic variance have minimal opportunity to operate."[8]

The methodology chosen had several characteristics designed to improve the use of the telephone as a medium of exchange for the interviews and assured maximum number of contacts with the targeted population at minimum expense. Second, the use of the SRL's computerized random digit dialing and follow-up techniques assured that the entire population had an equal chance of being contacted. Third, the needs assessment was run simultaneously with a second survey concerning the day care of young children. The relatively non-threatening nature of the screening questions in this latter survey helped to defuse defensive reactions to the potentially sensitive topic of educational attainment. Fourth, the use of Rosenberg's process of collaboration assured high validity in the data analysis. Fifth, the project featured an ongoing collaborative evaluation by the project staff, the Survey Research Lab, and State Board of VTAE. This collaboration was designed to help assure high quality results in the face of a complex and multifaceted needs assessment project.

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Objective 1. Demographic Data

The demographic data of age, education, race and income are crucial to general understanding of the non-high school graduate. Other data such as sex and employment may provide clues to aid in programming for their education in the future. These findings are presented below.

a. Age

The age distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 3. This table also contains ABE participation data supplied by the State Board of VTAE, and general population data obtained from the short report of the U.S. Census P - 20, N 334 completed in 1976. Table 3 indicates that, whereas older individuals constitute a relatively large percentage of the ABE eligible population, this group is under-represented in the ABE participant population. Thus, 31% of the high school non-completers were 65 years of age and older, whereas this age cohort comprised 11% of the general population and 1% of the ABE partipants. Conversely, the 16-25 year old age group comprised 19% of both the needs assessment sample and the general population, yet were 58% of the ABE participants.

TABLE 3

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS - GENERAL POPULATION AND PRESENT ABE PARTICIPANTS (N = 1680)

N	Age	Percent of Respondents	Percent in the General Population	Percent of ABE Participants
316	16-25	19%	19%	58%
139	26-35	8	14	23
175	36-45	10	10	11
181	46-55	11	11	6
279	56-65	17	9	2
326	66-75	19	11	1
207	76 and older	12		

b. Education

The formal educational attainment of the respondents is presented in Table 4. These data indicate that most of the respondents attained at least the fifth grade. Furthermore about half the respondents (47%) had less than a ninth grade education while 52% attained from the ninth to the eleventh grade.

TABLE 4

YEARS OF SCHOOLING ATTAINED BY RESPONDENTS
(N = 1580)

N	%	Grade Level
40	2	0-4th grade
748	45	5-8
872	52	9th up to grade 12 but did not graduate

c. Race

The racial heritage of the sample is outlined in Table 5. These data have been compared with the racial background of ABE partipants. Table 5 indicates that minorities are participating in Wisconsin ABE programs in excess of their percentage of the eligible population. Thus, Blacks and Native Americans are participating at about three times their ABE eligible base population and Hispanics and Asians are participating at over ten times their base.

TABLE 5

RACIAL HERITAGE OF RESPONDENTS
(N = 1680)

N	Respondents %	Racial Heritage	ABE Participants
1539	92.0	White	60
78	4.5	Black	13
23	1.5	Hispanic	16
19	1.0	Native American	3
9	0.5	Asian	7

d. Income

The income distribution of the respondents is given in Table 6. These data indicate that the majority of the respondents would be classified in the lower income brackets. Of the 1,680 respondents, 27% stated that they earn less than $6,000 a year and 52% stated that they earn less than $12,000 a year. On the other hand, there are a number of the respondents who would be classified in the middle and upper income brackets. Eighteen percent of the total sample had earnings of $18,000 a year.

TABLE 6

INCOME OF RESPONDENTS, 1979
(N = 1680)

N	%	Income Level
249	15	Less than $4,000
205	12	4,000-5,900
228	14	6,000-8,999
178	11	9,000-11,999
158	9	12,000-14,999
103	6	15,000-17,999
173	10	18,000-24,999
57	3	25,000-[illegible]7,999
71	[illegible]	More than 30,000
209	12	Don't know

e. Other items

Some additional demographic data from the sample are presented below. Of the 1,680 respondents:

a) 43% are male and 57% are female

b) 81% stated that they grew up in Wisconsin

c) 2.5% stated that they grew up outside the U.S.

d) 54% are married

e) 8% are separated/divorced

f) 20% are widowed

g) 18% never married

h) 45% stated that they are presently employed

e. Other items, Cont.

i) 23% stated that they have a physical handicap

j) 30% rent their home

k) 61% own or are buying their home

l) 7% live with parent/s

Objective 2. Educational Skills

The respondents were asked a series of questions that served as indicators of educational skills. These questions do not represent a complete assessment, but rather were designed to yield a relevant indication of educational skills within the constraints of the telephone interview format. The first series of questions focused on the respondent's perceived difficulties in completing commonly encountered forms and are closely allied to reading, mathematics and English proficiency objectives. The second type of question dealt specifically with assessed difficulty of various reading material.

a. Reading, Math and English proficiency

Of the 1,680 respondents, 55% stated that they do at times need help in filling out forms. Table 7 identifies the specific forms with which the respondents needed help. These data indicate that the most difficulty was experienced with tax forms with 35% of the sample checking this category.

TABLE 7

FORMS THAT RESPONDENTS NEEDED HELP IN FILLING OUT
(N = 1680)

N	% Needing Help	Type of Form
580	35	Income Tax
231	14	Medical
229	14	Insurance
142	9	Social Security
134	8	Legal
93	6	Job applications
144	9	Other

The reasons given by the respondents for having difficulty in filling out forms are presented in Table 8. These data indicate that 47% of the respondents experienced difficulty with the structure and content of the form itself, while 46% experienced basic educational difficulties including reading and/or arithmetic.

TABLE 8

REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS FOR HAVING DIFFICULTY IN FILLING OUT FORMS
(N = 1680)

N	%	Reason Given
796	47	The form is complicated and hard to follow
765	46	The words are complicated and hard to understand
333	20	The arithmetic is hard to do
291	17	The print is too small
179	10	Other

Table 9 identifies the individuals that the respondents look to for help in filling out forms. The data indicate that the respondents most often turn to a friend or relative to assist them in completing forms with 30% checking this response.

TABLE 9

INDIVIDUALS WHO HELP RESPONDENTS FILL OUT FORMS
(N = 1680)

N	%	Identified Helper
504	30	Friend/relative
233	14	Someone in office
171	10	H&R Block or similar firm
105	6	Lawyer
35	2	Accountant
19	1	Other

b. Assessed difficulty of reading materials

The respondents were asked a series of questions that focused on their reading habits and the assessed degree of difficulty of various reading materials. Their answers are presented in Table 10. These data indicate that the sample reads a variety of commonly encountered materials. News articles were read by 89% of the respondents; books, by 88%; and magazines, by 87%. On the other hand, magazines were perceived as being easy to read by 76% of the respondents; news articles, by 69%; and books, by 52%. The respondents experienced greater difficulty with less commonly encountered materials, such as technical manuals, legal forms, and income tax forms. Income tax forms were perceived as being hard to read by 60% of the sample: legal forms, by 53%, and technical manuals, by 38%.

TABLE 10

ASSESSED DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY OF VARIOUS READING MATERIALS BY RESPONDENTS
(N = 1680)

Reading Material	Ratings					
	Those Who Do Read				Those Who Do Not Read	
	N	(in %) Easy	Ave	Hard	N	%
Books	1468	52	40	8	199	12
Technical manuals	893	23	39	38	777	46
Magazines	1455	76	20	4	219	13
Newspaper sports	942	73	19	6	731	43
Newspaper editorials	1355	65	31	5	318	19
News articles	1494	69	27	4	181	11
Legal forms	1194	14	33	53	481	29
Income tax forms	1160	14	27	60	514	31

As an additional indicator of educational skill, the interviewers were asked to rate the difficulty they experienced in understanding each respondent during the interview. The interviewers were part of the paid staff of the Wisconsin Survey Research Lab, and had successfully completed an interviewer training program. Many had been on the staff for several years, and had participated in many studies in which interviewing respondents of different backgrounds, income levels, educational attainment, and ages was the practice. These interviewers were generally satisfied with the ABE eligible population's oral skills during the period of the interview. The interviewers perceived 75% of the respondents as "easy to understand;" 4% as "difficult to understand;" and 18% as "somewhere in between."

Objective 3. General Level of Functioning in the Environment

The respondents were asked a series of questions that served as indicators of a general social functioning level. As in Objective 2, these questions were designed to yield a relevant indication of such functioning within the constraints of the telephone interview format.

The first series of questions dealt with social integration as evidenced by the respondents' participation in community groups. The next dealt with leisure; the third, with work roles; and the last, with life problems.

a. Social integration

Of the 1,600 respondents, 72% stated that they were a member of a church; 24% stated that they were members of church-related groups; and 25% stated that they belonged to groups, clubs, or associations in the community other than church-related.

b. Use of leasure

The respondents' use of leisure time served as an additional indicator of the level of functioning. Weekday leisure activity is presented in Table 11. This table indicates that the sample spend their weekday leisure time in a

variety of ways with much of this activity having a significant participatory component.

TABLE 11

WEEKDAY LEISURE ACTIVITY OF RESPONDENTS
(N = 1680)

N	%	Leisure Time Activity
511	30	Hobbies and crafts
303	23	Sports and outdoor activities
377	22	TV, movies, and other mass entertainment
312	19	Informal social activities
275	16	Reading
211	13	Work around the house
188	11	Aimless, frivolous activities
94	6	Organizational and charitable
85	5	Shopping
78	5	Art and music
54	3	Cooking and baking
33	2	Family activities - play with children
20	1	Traveling
10	1	Go to school - study
77	5	Other
145	9	Nothing, no free time

Table 12 identifies the number of hours that the respondents watch television on an average weekday. Of the 1,680 respondents, 10% watch less than one hour; 69% watch between one and five hours; and 21% watch more than five hours of television on an average weekday.

TABLE 12

WEEKDAY HOURS SPENT WATCHING TELEVISION BY RESPONDENTS
(N = 1680)

N	%	Hours
93	6	None
58	4	Less than one hour
247	14	1-1.9
402	24	2-2.9
289	17	3
215	13	4
136	8	5
88	5	6
32	2	7
102	6	8 or more hours

Table 13 identifies the commercial television programs watched by the respondents. It can be seen that comedy shows were the most often watched (29%), followed closely in personal preference by news and documentary programs (27%) and soap operas (20%).

TABLE 13

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED BY RESPONDENTS
(N = 1680)

N	%	TV Programs
488	29	Comedy
448	27	News-documentary
334	20	Soap opera
257	15	Game or quiz shows
221	13	Movies
170	10	Police, detective, spy shows
130	8	Sports shows
113	7	Talk shows
95	6	Variety, music
33	2	Travel, adventure, wildlife
28	2	Religious
40	2	Whatever is on
73	5	Other

c. Work roles

Table 14 identifies the primary source of financial support of the sample. As reported in the responses to Objective 1, 44% of the respondents listed employment as their primary source of support. Additionally, 35% of the respondents listed social security or pensions, a statistic indicative of the high percentage of older individuals in the ABE eligible population. On the other hand, 4% of the respondents listed welfare or unemployment compensation as their primary source of support, a lower figure than might be expected.

TABLE 14

SOURCE OF RESPONDENTS' SUPPORT
(N = 1680)

N	%	Source of Support
749	44	Employment
532	32	Social security
167	10	Spouse
48	3	Welfare
44	3	Pension
37	2	Parents
26	2	Investments
15	1	Unemployment
37	2	Other

The respondents who were employed were asked to identify the nature of their job. The response was categorized into standard U.S. Census job classifications. These data are presented in Table 15. Of the 749 employed respondents, 23% were in blue collar or operative jobs; 19% were in skilled blue-collar and craftsman's jobs; 12% were service workers; 10% were farmers; 7% were clerical; and 5% were laborers.

TABLE 15

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS
(N = 749 employed)

N	%	Employment Category
173	23	Blue-collar and operative
144	19	Skilled blue-collar and craftsman
86	12	Service workers/cleaning
74	10	Farmers/farm managers
54	7	Clerical
44	6	Transportation operatives
40	5	Managers and administrators (not farm)
37	5	Laborers (not farm)
31	4	Health service
28	4	Sales
15	2	Farm laborers
12	2	Household help
7	1	Protective service
2	1	Professional technical

The variable of "employment" was cross-referenced with the block variables of "age" and "sex." These data are presented in Table 16 and are summarized below.

Male respondents were more likely to be employed than female respondents, regardless of age.

Male respondents had a 76% employment rate in the youngest age category (16-25 years). Their employment peaks in the 36-45 year age range at 92%. There is a significant decrease in employment for each successive age category thereafter, including the 46-55 year age range, a time in the age cycle when there are expectations for high employment.

The employment data for female respondents showed that 44% were employed in the 16-25 year range with over 50% for ages 26-55. There was a drop to 32% in the 56-65 year range, and only 3% of female respondents were employed after age 66.

TABLE 16

EMPLOYMENT OF RESPONDENTS (BY AGE AND SEX)
(N = 743 of 1674)

Age	Male			Female		
	N*	n**	%	N	n	%
16-25	172	131	76	167	74	44
26-35	65	59	91	100	53	53
36-45	79	73	92	85	45	53
46-55	88	73	83	104	56	54
56-65	128	82	64	171	55	32
66+	194	32	16	321	10	3
All ages.	726	450	62	948	293	31

*N represents the total sample.

**n represents the respondents who answered the question in the affirmative

Table 17 identifies the number of employers that the respondents have had over the previous five-year period. These data are cross-referenced by the variables of "age" and "sex," and the findings are listed below.

Female respondents aged 16-25 were more likely to have had the same job in the previous five-year period than their male counterparts. On the other hand, male respondents over 35 years of age were more likely to have held the same job for five years than the female respondents.

For the younger respondents aged 16-35, there was relatively greater job turnover than for the older respondents. This was especially apparent in the 26-35 year age range where the individual is old enough to have worked for one employer for five years, and where the rate of employment is comparatively high. (See Table 16) Yet, only 40% of this cohort had stayed with one employer for the previous five-year period. The data indicated that high employment and job stability peaked in the 36-45 ages for males and in the 46-55 ages for females. In general, there was greater variability across the age ranges for males.

TABLE 17

RESPONDENTS WHO HAD WORKED FOR ONE EMPLOYER
IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS
(BY AGE AND SEX)
(N = 604 of 1674)

Age	Male			Female		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
16-25	172	32	19	167	42	25
26-35	65	26	40	100	40	40
36-45	79	66	84	85	39	46
46-55	88	65	74	104	52	50
56-65	128	91	71	171	67	39
66+	194	51	26	321	33	10
All ages	726	331	46	948	273	29

d. Life problems

A final set of questions that served as indicators of the level of functioning of the ABE eligible population concerned the respondents' stated reaction to various life problems. These problems included: being laid off from work; having a serious problem with one's children; having a serious illness; and being swindled in the purchase of a car. The coping strategies offered were: to ask help from a social service agency; to seek advice from family and friends; to attempt to solve the problem on one's own; and to consult various professionals (doctors, lawyers, clergy). These data are presented in Table 18. Table 18 indicates the extent to which respondents either try to solve problems "on your own" or "seek advice from family and friends." It can be expected that the family and friends of the respondents with limited qualifications for solving problems will have limited qualifications themselves. The two categories, "family and friends" and "on your own," are listed by 50% or more of the respondents in all but one of the eight tabular cells. On specific items such as "a serious illness" or being "swindled in the purchase of a car," doctor and lawyer were identified to an even greater degree, indicating other sources of help were utilized in such situations.

TABLE 18

RESPONDENTS' STATED COPING REACTION TO VARIOUS LIFE PROBLEMS
(N = 1680)

Stated Problem		Potential Coping Strategy											
		Ask for Help from Social Service Agency			Get Advice from Family and Friends			Try to Solve Problem on Your Own			Other Resources		
		Yes	No	Depends	Yes	No	Dep.	Yes	No	Dep.	Yes	No	Dep.
If you were laid off	N	537	800	219	918	538	130	1400	152	69			
	%	32	48	13	55	32	8	83	9	4			
											Clergy		
A serious problem with children*	N	613	451	185	775	404	138	1049	201	88	833	353	119
	%	37	27	11	46	24	8	62	12	5	50	21	7
											Doctor		
A serious illness	N	629	684	245	1018	483	134	841	648	160	1623	16	26
	%	37	41	15	61	29	8	50	39	10	97	1	2
											Lawyer		
Swindled in the purchase of a car	N	620	734	98	886	612	97	908	589	111	1198	190	215
	%	37	44	6	53	37	6	54	35	7	71	11	13

*Small percentage with child effected percentage total

Objective 4. Enrollment and Retention

The data presented in this section includes findings related to ways respondents found out about adult classes, future plans regarding adult classes, subjects respondents would like to learn, desired learning formats, and barriers to enrollment.

A. Knowledge of and future plans regarding adult classes

The respondents were asked a series of questions that focused on their knowledge of and future plans regarding adult classes. Of the 1,680 respondents:

1. 61% stated that they knew of adult classes being offered in their community.
2. 52% stated that adult classes would be helpful to them.
3. 48% stated that they would consider taking an adult class in the future.
4. 43% stated that they had considered getting their high school diploma.
5. 24% stated that they had attended adult classes other than ABE/GED.
6. 18% stated that they would likely attend an adult class in the next year.
7. 11% stated that they had attended Adult Basic Education, GED, or reading skills classes in the past.
8. 2.5% stated that they are presently enrolled in an adult class.

Selected variables relevant to enrollment were further analyzed by crosstabulation. These variables are listed below.

1. Stated difficulty in completed various forms.
2. Desire to be able to complete forms by oneself.
3. Belief that adult classes would be helpful.
4. Knowledge of adult classes being held in the community.

5. Stated intention to enroll in an adult class in the next year.

6. Consideration of getting a high school diploma.

These variables were cross-referenced with the independent variables of "age," "race," "sex," "education," and "population," and are given in Tables 19-32.

TABLE 19.--Respondents Who Believe That Classes Would be Helpful, Who Have Knowledge of Classes in Their Community, Who Need Help With Forms, Who Want to Complete Forms and Who Intend to Enroll in an Adult Class (By Age, Race, Sex, Education and Community Size).

		Adult Classes Helpful		Knowledge of Classes		Need Help with Forms		Want to Complete Forms		Intend to Enroll in Class	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age											
16-25	339	253	75	228	67	177	52	156	46	167	49
26-45	329	242	74	230	70	175	53	123	37	75	23
46-65	491	236	48	323	66	270	55	140	29	35	7
66+	517	141	27	245	47	302	58	116	22	17	3
Level of Sig.			.000		.000		.12		.000		.000
Gamma			.58		.30				.51		.63
Race											
White	1539	768	50	960	62	845	55	466	30	238	15
Black	79	65	83	35	45	48	62	41	53	33	42
Level of Sig.			.000		.005		.30		.000		.000
Gamma			-.86		.39				-.64		-.74
Sex											
Male	727	354	49	439	60	414	57	230	32	117	16
Female	953	526	55	590	62	513	54	305	32	177	19
Level of Sig.			.04		.91		.23		.31		.41
Gamma			-.11								
Education											
0-8	788	293	37	410	52	482	61	228	29	55	7
9-11	872	579	66	608	70	434	50	305	39	239	27
Level of Sig.			.000		.000		.000		.000		.000
Gamma			-.63		-.43		.24		-.47		-.54
Community Size											
Rural (less)	415	215	52	265	64	235	57	139	33	45	11
10,000	487	226	46	288	59	287	59	147	30	66	14
10-25,000	181	99	55	130	72	95	52	54	30	40	22
25-50,000	145	79	54	103	71	70	48	48	33	34	23
50-200,000	214	119	56	136	64	101	47	60	28	55	26
Larger	192	127	66	89	46	114	59	74	39	50	26
Level of Sig.			.002		.000		.02		.06		.000
Gamma			-.12		-.07		.05		.05		-.23

As indicated in Table 19, "age" was significantly associated with all the variables related to enrollment with the exception of the respondents "stated difficulty in completing various forms." The data indicated that the younger the respondent, the greater the likelihood that there was "a desire to complete forms on their own"; "a belief that adult classes would be helpful"; and "an intent to enroll in an adult class." The relationship between "age" and "knowledge of adult classes" was complicated by the introduction of "education" as a test variable. As indicated in Table 20, there was a significant association between knowledge of adult classes and age, but only for those respondents with 0-8 years of formal education. That is, the respondents age 65 or younger with 0-8 years of formal education were more likely to have knowledge of adult classes than the respondents age 66 and older in this educational category. On the other hand, there was not a significant association between "age" and "knowledge of adult classes" for the respondents with 9-11 years of formal education.

TABLE 20

AGE AND KNOWLEDGE OF ADULT CLASSES (BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION)
(N = 1658)

Age	% Having Knowledge of Adult Classes by Educational Category								
	0-8			9-11			All Grades (0-11)		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
16-25	20	12	60	319	216	68	339	228	67
26-45	57	35	61	270	194	72	327	229	70
46-65	307	194	63	180	127	71	487	321	66
65+	402	169	42	103	71	69	505	240	48
All ages	786	410	52	872	608	70	1658	1018	61

As indicated in Table 19, "race" was significantly associated with all the variables related to enrollment with the exception of "difficulty in

completing various forms." The data indicate that Black respondents were generally more positive about adult classes and a greater percentage intended to enroll than those respondents who are white. On the other hand, the Black respondents had less knowledge of the adult classes being held in their community than their white counterparts. This association was not affected by the introduction of the test variables.

Community size (in Table 19) was associated with the variables related to enrollment. With the introduction of "age" as a test variable, this relationship was strengthened. For example, concerning the respondents' "knowledge of adult classes," noted in Table 21, the intersection of the row and column percentages in the matrix formed by the variables of "age" and "community size," was significantly different than for either variable acting alone. This occurence provides evidence of an "interactive effect" with the variables of "age," "community size," and "knowledge of adult classes."

TABLE 21

RESPONDENTS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF ADULT CLASSES
(BY AGE AND COMMUNITY SIZE)
(1634 Respondents)

Community Size	Total N and n and % with Knowledge of Adult Classes														
	Ages 16-25			Ages 26-45			Ages 46-65			Ages 66+			All Ages		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
Rural	51	32	63%	88	56	64%	162	79	49%	114	67	59%	415	234	56%
Less than 10,000	91	55	60	84	44	52	135	82	61	177	106	60	487	287	59
10,000-24,999	43	19	44	36	17	47	45	27	60	57	32	56	181	95	52
25,000-49,000	39	19	49	32	15	47	29	15	52	45	21	47	145	70	48
50,000-200,000	54	21	39	51	19	37	53	27	51	56	34	61	214	101	47
Larger city	54	26	48	33	22	67	56	34	61	49	31	63	192	113	59
All community sizes	332	172	52	324	173	53	480	264	55	498	291	58	1634	900	55

The data presented in Table 19 do not show a strong association between "sex" and the variables related to enrollment. Only in the case of the respondents' "belief that adult classes would be helpful" was significance obtained and even there the gamma statistic was not persuasive. However, with the introduction of "age" as a test variable, the relationship was strengthened for many age groups. (See Table 22) The data indicated that female respondents were more likely to believe adult classes would be helpful than their male counterparts, the relationship not upheld only in the case of respondents over 65 years of age. This finding gives evidence of the potential for distortion caused by the relatively high number of older respondents in the sample.

TABLE 22

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO BELIEVED THAT ADULT CLASSES WOULD BE HELPFUL (BY AGE AND SEX)
(N = 1676)

Sex	16-25			26-45			46-65			66+			Total		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
Male	172	119	69	144	98	68	216	86	40	194	50	26	726	353	49
Female	167	134	80	185	145	78	275	151	55	321	95	30	948	525	55
Both Sexes	339	253	75	329	243	74	491	237	48	517	145	28	1676	878	52

Table 19 showed that education was significantly associated with all the variables related to enrollment. However, this relationship was attenuated in certain cases by the introduction of "age" as a test variable.

Regarding the respondents' "desire to complete forms by oneself" and "stated intention to enroll in an adult class," the relationship was not upheld. The data in Tables 23 and 24 show that for all age groups, the desire

to complete forms by oneself, and the intention to enroll in an adult class, was not significantly related to level of education.

TABLE 23

RESPONDENTS' DESIRE TO COMPLETE FORMS BY ONESELF
(BY AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION)
(N = 1658)

Education	16-25			26-45			46-65			66+			All Ages		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
0-8	20	13	65	57	28	49	307	96	31	402	91	23	786	228	29
9-11	319	143	45	270	95	35	180	52	29	103	24	23	872	305	35
0-11	339	156	46	327	123	38	487	148	30	505	115	23	1658	533	32

TABLE 24

RESPONDENTS' INTENT TO ENROLL IN ADULT CLASSES
(IN THE NEXT YEAR (BY AGE AND EDUCATION)
(N = 1658)

Education	16-25			26-45			46-65			66+			All Ages		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
0-8	20	10	50	57	13	23	307	19	6	402	13	3	786	55	7
9-11	319	157	49	270	62	23	180	16	9	103	4	4	872	239	27
0-11	339	167	49	327	75	23	487	35	7	505	17	3	1658	294	18

Regarding the respondents' "knowledge of adult classes" and "belief that adult classes would be helpful," the relationship to "education" was affected by the introduction of "age" as a test variable. As indicated in Tables 25 and 26, older respondents with 9-11 years of formal education were more likely to have knowledge of, and positive beliefs about, adult classes than the older

respondents with from 0-8 years of formal education. On the other hand, "education" was not a significant factor in the prediction of these two dependent variables for the younger respondents.

TABLE 25

BELIEF THAT ADULT CLASSES WOULD BE HELPFUL
(BY AGE AND EDUCATION)
(N = 1658)

Education	Age Distribution														
	16-25			26-45			46-65			66+			Total		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
0-8	20	14	70	57	43	75	307	136	44	402	100	25	786	293	37
9-11	319	239	75	270	199	74	180	100	56	103	41	40	872	579	66
0-11	339	253	77	327	242	74	487	239	49	505	141	28	1658	872	53

TABLE 26

KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE ARE ADULT CLASSES
(BY AGE AND EDUCATION)
(N = 1658)

Education	Age Distribution														
	16-25			26-45			46-65			66+			Total		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
0-8	20	12	60	57	35	61	307	194	63	402	169	42	786	410	52
9-11	319	216	68	270	194	72	180	127	71	103	71	69	872	608	70
0-11	339	228	67	327	229	70	487	321	66	505	240	48	1658	1018	61

Father's Educational Attainment

In Table 27 and 28 the respondents' "intent to enroll in an adult class" and "desire to obtain the high school diploma" were cross-referenced with the respondents' "father's educational attainment." These data indicate that the respondents' "father's educational attainment" is significantly associated with the respondent's own attitude toward resuming formal education. That is, the higher the educational attainment of the respondent's father, the more likely the respondent was to "intend to enroll in an adult class" and/or "consider obtaining his high school diploma." This association was not affected by the introduction of the test variables.

TABLE 27

INTENT TO ENROLL IN AN ADULT CLASS (BY FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT)
(N = 874)

Intent to Enroll		Father's Educational Attainment					
		0-8 Grade		9-11 Grade		High Grad	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	222	92	41	37	17	93	42
No	523	405	77	40	8	78	15
It depends	129	85	66	16	12	28	22
Total	874	582	67	93	11	199	23

TABLE 28

RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED OBTAINING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (BY FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT)

Considered Obtaining		0-8 Grade		9-11 Grade		High Grad	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	489	259	53	70	14	160	33
No	450	373	83	28	6	49	11

B. Ways Respondents Found Out About Adult Classes

The respondents were asked to identify the ways that they found out about adult classes. The findings, presented in Table 29, indicated that 68% found about adult classes from reading the newspaper; 67% from notices sent by mail; 53% from another person; 42% from listening to the radio; 29% from notices sent home from school; 21% from watching television; and 15% from notices received at work. Table 29 also includes cross tabulations with the variables of age, race, community size, sex, education, and intent to enroll in an adult class. The findings, which indicated that all variables were significantly associated with the ways respondent found out about adult classes, are summarized in the following tables.

TABLE 29.--Ways Respondents Who Knew of Adult Classes Found Out About Them (by Age, Race, Community Size, Sex, Years of Schooling and Likely to Attend an Adult Class During the Next Year)

Age		Tele-vision		News-paper		Shopper		Work		Radio		Posters		Mail		School		Another Person	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
16-25	228	41	18	111	49	35	15	43	22	99	43	86	38	135	59	75	40	165	72
26-35	109	26	24	65	60	28	26	22	20	41	38	41	38	73	67	39	36	63	58
36-45	121	21	17	94	78	37	31	25	21	40	33	28	23	85	70	43	39	61	50
46-55	132	20	15	97	73	45	35	20	20	64	48	37	28	99	74	42	39	69	52
56-65	191	34	18	137	72	48	25	28	15	91	48	99	52	143	75	44	23	83	43
66-75	158	36	23	127	80	57	36	14	9	66	42	42	27	103	65	31	20	70	44
76+	87	31	36	68	78	13	15	4	5	35	41	16	19	53	62	9	10	32	37
Sig.			.000		.000		.000		.88		.15		.003		.01		.58		.000
Gamma			-.16		-.33		-.12		.01		-.02		.17		-.07		.08		.30
Race																			
White	960	201	21	673	70	251	26	148	15	413	43	280	29	661	69	266	28	506	53
Black	35	9	26	9	26	5	14	3	9	11	31	7	20	14	40	9	26	22	63
Sig.			.65		.000		.18		.33		.23		.36		.001		1.00		.31
Gamma					.74										.54				
Community Size (in thousands)																			
Rural	269	56	21	199	74	82	30	29	11	125	46	72	27	198	74	76	28	131	49
Under 10	294	43	15	198	67	87	30	50	17	121	41	78	27	176	60	65	22	143	49
10-25	142	32	23	100	70	34	24	24	17	64	45	58	41	91	64	34	24	76	54
25-50	113	28	25	75	66	30	26	19	17	42	37	29	26	66	58	33	29	60	53
50-200	136	27	20	83	61	23	17	24	18	56	41	36	26	86	63	44	32	79	58
Over 200	95	23	24	36	38	5	5	11	12	25	26	21	22	59	62	30	32	46	48
Sig.			.16		.000		.000		.48		.03		.002		.02		.03		.22
Gamma			-.06		.22		.24		-.05		.11		.01		.06		-.10		-.08

TABLE 29 (continued)--Ways Respondents Who Knew of Adult Classes Found Out About Them (by Age, Race, Community Size, Sex, Years of Schooling and Likely to Attend an Adult Class During the Next Year)

		Tele-vision		News-paper		Shopper		Work		Radio		Posters		Mail		School		Another Person	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex																			
Male	439	107	24	297	68	112	26	86	20	212	48	133	30	291	66	126	39	214	49
Female	590	112	19	404	68	151	26	71	12	224	38	166	28	403	68	157	27	331	56
Sig.			.03		1.00		1.00		.06		.000		.43		.71		.58		.03
Gamma			.17		.00		.00		.18		.21								-.14
Education																			
0-8	412	97	24	290	71	124	30	54	13	173	41	109	26	278	67	89	22	179	43
9-11	609	120	20	406	67	137	23	102	17	261	43	189	31	415	69	193	32	359	59
Sig.			.04		.03		.01		.04		.35		.05		.65		.000		.000
Gamma			.14		.14		.25		.25				-.12				-.33		-.41
Likely to attend class																			
Yes	226	53	23	136	60	46	20	44	19	100	44	78	35	147	65	86	38	161	71
No	605	130	21	436	72	163	27	183	30	255	42	158	26	412	68	141	23	259	43
Sig.			.25		.001		.07		.97		.57		.06		.62		.02		.000
Gamma			.007		-.23		-.12		.01		.01		.15		-.05		.19		.47

The data presented in Table 29 are summarized as follows:

1) Age and variables related to ways that respondents found out about adult classes.

It was found that the respondents in the 16-25 age range were more likely to have heard of adult classes from another person; while those over 35 years of age were most likely to have heard of adult classes in the newspaper and from notices sent by mail.

2) Race and variables related to ways that respondents found out about adult classes.

It was found that white respondents were more likely to find out about adult classes from the newspaper while Black respondents were more likely to find out about adult classes from a friend.

3) Sex and variables related to ways that respondents found out about adult classes.

It was found that male respondents were more likely to find out about adult classes on television than female respondents while female respondents were more likely to find out from a friend.

4) Education and variables related to ways that respondents found out about adult classes.

It was found that respondents with 9-11 years of schooling were more likely to find out about adult classes from another person or from notices sent from school than respondents with 0-8 years of schooling.

5) Likely to attend an adult class and variables related to ways that respondents found out about adult classes.

Respondents who stated that they were likely to attend an adult class were more likely to have found out about adult classes from a friend or from notices sent from school than respondents who stated their attendance would be unlikely. The primary source for finding out about adult classes for unlikely attendees was in the newspaper. These data indicate that while the

newspaper was a valuable medium for publicizing adult classes, it was not as effective as "word-of-mouth" advertisizing in translating general publicity into actual attendance. This finding corroborates the generally held belief of ABE teachers that "word-of-mouth" is the most effective recruitment tool.

C. Analysis of Subjects Respondents Would Like to Take in an Adult Class

The respondents were asked what subjects they would like to learn if they were to take an adult class. The subjects chosen by the respondents were: basic education, vocational education, liberal education and nothing.* These subjects categories were cross-referenced with the following variables related to educational skills:

1. difficulty in completing forms by oneself.
2. receiving help in completing forms from friends and/or relatives.
3. desire to be able to complete forms on one's own.
4. belief that adult classes would be helpful.
5. knowledge of adult classes being offered in the community.
6. attendance in adult classes in the past.
7. assessment of books as "easy to read."
8. assessment of magazines as "easy to read."
9. assessment of news articles as "easy to read."

These variables were further crosstabulated with the block variables of "age," "sex," and "education," and are presented in Tables 30 to 35.

*Respondents not interested in any adult class subjects.

TABLE 30(

SUBJECTS RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO LEARN IF THEY WERE TO TAKE AN ADULT CLASS (BY SELECTED VARIABLES RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL SKILLS

		Adult Class Category Chosen							
		ABE/GED		Vocational		Liberal Ed.		Nothing	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Those who experience difficulty in completing forms on their own	1474	191	13	245	17	136	9	236	16
Those who obtain help in completing forms from friends and/or relatives	809	119	15	116	14	71	9	136	17
Those who would want to be able to complete forms on their own	1470	147	10	155	11	88	6	73	5
Those who believe that adult classes would be helpful	1352	204	15	313	23	165	12	93	7
Those who are aware of adult classes being offered in their community	1160	174	15	334	29	207	18	199	17
Those who have attended adult classes in the past	1473	56	4	55	4	29	2	13	1
Those who find books "easy to read"	1465	108	7	223	15	140	10	197	13
Those who find magazines "easy to read"	1472	179	12	328	22	211	14	251	17
Those who find news stories "easy to read"	1473	157	11	305	21	198	5	256	17

The data presented in Table 30 are summarized as follows:

1. Respondents were more likely to choose vocational education subjects than ABE/GED or liberal education. The relationship was not affected when the data were cross referenced with seven of the nine variables related to educational skills.
2. Respondents who obtained help in completing forms from a friend or relative were less interested in adult class subjects than the other respondent groups. This finding points out the functional role that friends and family play in the face of basic skill deficiency.
3. Respondents who found basic materials, like books and magazines, hard to read were more likely to choose ABE/GED subjects. This finding gives evidence that interest in Adult Basic Education can be traced, not only to desire or the high school equivalency credential, but also a frank appraisal of weakness in basic skills.
4. When age was introduced as a test variables (Table 31), the association between interest in ABE/GED subjects and variables related to educational skills was complicated. For example, the finding that the respondents who were interested in basic education subjects were equally likely as those interested in liberal education to have knowledge of adult classes being offered in their community (reported in Table 30) was not upheld for the respondents in the 16-25 age range. On the other hand, those respondents over 25 years of age interested in liberal education were significantly more likely than their counterparts interested in basic education to have knowledge of adult classes held in their community.

TABLE 31

RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN SPECIFIC ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS AND KNOWLEDGE OF ADULT CLASSES BEING HELD IN THE COMMUNITY BY AGE
(N = 1157)

Age	N	Adult Subject Category							
		ABE/GED		Vocational		Liberal Ed.		Nothing	
		% Who are Aware of Adult Classes Being Offered in Community							
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
16-25	249	72	29	92	37	39	16	5	2
26-45	234	57	24	95	41	31	31	28	12
46-65	360	29	8	108	30	73	20	78	22
66+	314	16	5	39	12	63	20	88	28

5. Respondents interested in liberal education subjects were less likely to experience difficulty in completing forms, more likely to be aware of adult classes being offered, and more likely to find books, magazines, and news articles to be easy to read. It would seem that formal educational attainment was neither a significant impediment to this group's liberal education goals, nor to their mastery of basic skills.

6. Respondents who were not interested in any of the adult class subjects expressed less difficulty with basic educational skills than respondents interested in ABE/GED. The data further indicated that those not interested in adult classes were less likely to: a) be interested in improving their basic educational skills through formal educational channels; and b) to believe that the acquisition of basic skills was a personally desirable goal. They many, in fact, have already obtained the skills in a nonformal setting.

Selected block variables and subjects respondents would like to learn in an adult class

The subjects that the respondents would like to learn if they were to take an adult class were further differentiated by crosstabulation with the block variables of age, sex, race, community size and education. These data are presented in Table 32 and are summarized below.

TABLE 32

SUBJECTS RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO LEARN IF THEY WERE TO TAKE AN ADULT CLASS IN THE NEXT YEAR. (BY AGE, RACE, COMMUNITY SIZE, SEX AND EDUCATION)
(N = 1472)

Age	N	ABE/GED		Vocational		Liberal Arts		Nothing	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
16-25	299	107	36	131	44	47	16	14	5
26-35	149	43	29	66	44	22	15	18	12
36-45	151	39	26	66	44	20	13	26	17
46-55	171	29	17	69	40	35	21	38	22
56-65	262	30	11	81	31	58	22	93	35
66-75	255	26	10	41	16	61	24	127	50
76+	185	13	7	21	11	33	18	118	64
Race									
White	1355	227	17	441	33	264	20	423	31
Black	67	40	60	16	24	7	10	4	6
Community Size									
Rural	370	49	13	146	40	67	18	108	25
Under 10,000	429	63	15	123	29	81	19	162	38
10-24,999	156	35	22	47	30	25	16	49	31
25-49,000	128	25	20	48	38	30	23	25	20
50-200,000	189	41	22	66	35	39	21	42	22
Over 200,000	168	64	38	41	24	27	16	36	21
Sex									
Male	646	142	22	275	43	47	7	182	28
Female	826	145	18	200	24	264	28	252	31
Education									
0-8	678	102	15	150	22	80	12	299	44
9-11	779	183	23	323	41	147	19	128	16

The data presented in Table 33 are summarized as follows:

1. Sex and interest in adult class subjects

Table 32 shows that male respondents were more likely to express an interest in vocational subjects and ABE/GED while female respondents expressed a greater interest in liberal education subjects. However, the relationship between "sex" and "vocational subjects" was complicated by the introduction of "age as a test variable. As indicated in Table 33, sex-related differences in predicting interest in vocational subjects were weakened for the younger-aged cohorts. That is, interest in vocational subjects by females in the 16-45 year age range was closer to the interest indicated by their male counterparts. Thus, the major share of the variance between the two sexes could be explained by the preferences of the respondents over 45 years of age.

TABLE 33

RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS. (BY AGE)
(N = 475)

Sex		16-25		26-45		46-65		66+		All Ages	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	646	75	12	66	10	91	14	43	7	275	43
Female	826	66	8	66	8	59	7	9	1	200	24
Both Sexes	1472	141	10	132	9	150	10	52	4	475	32

2. Age and interest in adult class subjects

As indicated in Table 32, the younger the respondent, the more likely it was that they would be interested in ABE/GED. Young and middle-aged respondents (under 55 years old) were more interested in vocational subjects than older respondents. Those respondents in the 46-75 age range were more interested in liberal education subjects than those in other age categories. However, when "sex" was added as a control variable (Table 34), the association between "age" and "liberal education" was upheld for the female respondents but not for the

male respondents. Lastly, Table 32 showed that the older the respondent the more likely it was that none of the adult class subjects would be of interest.

TABLE 34

RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN LIBERAL EDUCATION SUBJECTS
(BY SEX AND AGE).

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-25	17	11	30	21	47	16
25-45	5	4	27	22	42	14
46-65	10	5	85	35	93	22
66+	15	9	79	30	94	21
All ages	47	7	229	28	276	

3. Education and interest in adult class subjects

As indicated in Table 32, respondents who left school in grades 9-11 were more likely to express an interest in vocational subjects and ABE/GED while respondents who left school in grades 0-8 were more likely to state that none of the adult classes would be of interest. However, the relationship between "education" and "interest in ABE/GED" and "nothing at all" was complicated by the introduction of "age" as a control variable. These data presented in Table 35, show that the relationship between "education" and "interest in ABE/GED" was not upheld for older respondents. Moreover, for younger respondents the predicted relationship actually reversed. That is, the 16-45 year old respondents with 0-8 years of formal education were significantly more interested in ABE/GED than the 16-45 year old respondents with 9-11 years of formal education. This anomaly in the data is explained by the differences in actual numbers of respondents in the two educational categories.

2. Desired learning formats

The respondents were asked to identify acceptable learning formats for obtaining a high school diploma. Table 37 shows that the respondents chose a variety of learning formats. The response ranged from 88% who stated that going to adult classes was an acceptable learning format to 43% who found "doing it all on your own" to be an acceptable learning format.

TABLE 37

RESPONDENTS' PREFERRED LEARNING FORMAT FOR OBTAINING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
(N - 1680)

N	%	Learning Format
708	88	Going to adult classes
625	77	Meeting other people who are studying
599	74	Doing assignments at home
474	59	Meeting teacher at library
449	56	Teacher comes to home
426	53	Watching classes on TB
344	43	Doing it all on your own

3. Barriers to attendance

Table 38 lists the reasons given by respondents for terminating their attendance in [illegible]GED classes. Of the 178 respondents who had participated, 88 (50%) stated that conflicting responsibilities were the primary reason they discontinued their attendance, 26 (14%) stated that they met personal goals, 13 (8%) believed the program to be too hard, and 29 (17%) were critical of the program itself.

TABLE 38

REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS FOR TERMINATING ATTENDANCE IN ABE/GED CLASSES
(N = 178)

N	%	Reason
35	20	Got a job
26	14	Finished course/did not take test
16	9	Didn't like it
16	9	Too busy
16	9	Family responsibilities
14	8	Moved
13	8	Course too hard
7	4	They quit having a total program
7	4	Ill or disabled
5	3	Quit/got kicked out
4	2	Poor teaching
4	2	Didn't like the other sutdents
18	10	Other

Table 39 lists the reasons for not having obtained the high school diploma. These data indicate the extent to which work and the need for money present a barrier--real or imagined--to the completion of the high school diploma. Only 9% said the barrier was "didn't like school" compared to 35% who checked "went to work/needed money."

TABLE 39

REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS FOR NOT HAVING OBTAINED THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
(N = 1680)

N	%	Reason
586	35	Went to work/needed money
155	9	Didn't like school
111	7	Didn't have the time
101	6	Had children
87	5	No perceived need to finish
77	5	Family problems
66	4	No high school in area
64	4	Got married
55	3	Problems with teacher/principal
49	3	Illness
42	3	Laziness -- no drive
32	2	It wasn't necessary then
30	2	School too hard
27	2	Parents didn't encourage education
27	2	Didn't have transportation
18	1	Joined the army
153	9	No response

Table 40 identifies the reasons given by the respondents for not considering obtaining a high school diploma. The reason most often given was that the diploma has "no perceived value," with 43% of respondents checking this category.

TABLE 40

REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS FOR NOT CONSIDERING OBTAINING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
(N = 1680)*

N	%	Reason
727	43	No perceived value
353	21	Too busy
344	21	Had to work
291	17	Family responsibility
121	7	Too old
111	7	Poor past experience with school

*Several respondents gave more than one answer.

E. Indicators of Social Functioning

The respondents' intent to enroll in an adult class and the subjects that they would like to learn were crossreferenced with selected indicators of social functioning. The variables selected for crosstabulation were:

1. Interest in public television
2. Assistance to school-age children with school work
3. Attendance at school meetings for school-age children
4. Voter registration
5. Participation in community organizations and groups
6. Employment
7. Job stability
8. Income

These variables were further crosstabulated with the block variables of "age," "sex," and "education," and are presented in Tables 41 to 47.

1. Public television

There was a significant association between interest in formal adult education, be it basic, vocational or liberal, and interest in watching educational television. Table 41 showed that one-half of those interested in adult classes watch PBS, only one-third with no such interest watch PBS. This finding demonstrates that interest in classes may be part of a general predilection toward learning regardless of the source, classes, or television.

TABLE 41

RESPONDENTS WHO WATCH PUBLIC TELEVISION (BY THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO LEARN IN SPECIFIC ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS)
(N = 1422)

	Basic Education			Vocational Education			Liberal Education			Nothing		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
Those who watch PBS and are interested in each of the following subject categories	275	138	50	468	233	50	268	132	49	411	136	33

2. Involvement in the education of their children

As indicated in Table 42, the respondents who were interested in liberal education were more likely to "help their children with school work," and to "attend meetings for parents at school" than other respondents. The respondents who were interested in basic educational subjects were equally likely to be involved in school-related activities as the respondents who were interested in vocational education subjects. The respondents who were not interested in any of the adult class subjects were less likely to be involved with school than other respondents.

TABLE 42

ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN WITH SCHOOL WORK AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS FOR PARENTS AT SCHOOL (BY ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS)

Respondents Who	Adult Class Subjects											
	Basic Education			Vocational Education			Liberal Education			Nothing		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
Assist their school-age children with school work	88	60	68	141	95	67	58	47	81	58	35	60
Attend meetings for parents at school . .	140	55	39	141	90	64	58	45	78	58	33	57

3. Voter registration

Table 43 shows that the respondents who were interested in basic education subjects were the least likely to be registered to vote, while the respondents who were not interested in any of the adult class subjects were the most likely to be registered to vote.

TABLE 43

VOTER REGISTRATION (BY ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS)
(N = 912)

	Adult Class Subjects											
	Basic Education			Vocational Education			Liberal Education			Nothing		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
Those registered to vote	280	134	48	464	293	63	274	185	68	416	300	72

4. Participation in community groups

Table 44 demonstrates that the association between "participation in community groups" and "interest in adult class subjects" was affected by the respondent's age. That is, in the 16-25 year age category, the respondents not interested in any of the adult class subjects were the least likely to participate in community groups. In the 26-45 year age category the reverse was true. Finally, in the 45 years and older age category the respondents who were not interested in any of the adult class subjects were equally as likely to participate in community groups as the respondents who were interested in vocational subjects, but less so than the respondents interested in basic education and liberal education subjects.

TABLE 44

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY GROUPS OTHER THAN CHURCH (BY AGE AND INTEREST IN ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS)
(N = 1472)

Age Categories	Adult Class Subjects											
	% Who Participate in Community Groups											
	Basic Education			Vocational Education			Liberal Education			Nothing		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
16-25	107	18	17	131	26	20	47	9	19	14	1	7
26-45	82	14	17	132	35	27	42	7	17	44	16	36
46-65	59	22	37	150	42	28	93	34	37	131	33	25
66+	39	15	39	62	18	29	94	38	40	245	64	26
All ages	287	69	24	475	121	25	276	88	32	434	114	26

5. Employment, job stability and intent in adult classes

In Table 45 the variables of "employment" and "job stability" were cross-referenced with "intent to enroll in an adult class." These data indicate that there is only a slight association between "intent to enroll in an adult class" and "employment." Sixty-seven percent of those who intended to enroll were employed compared to 56% of those who do not intend to enroll. The association was enhanced when "job stability" was used as the employment variable. This comparison indicates that respondents with two or more employers in the previous five years were significantly more likely to intend to enroll in an adult class than respondents with the same employer over the five year period.

TABLE 45

INTENT TO ENROLL IN AN ADULT CLASS (BY EMPLOYMENT AND JOB STABILITY)
(N = 968)

Intent to Enroll in an Adult Class	Respondents Who Are Employed			Number of Employers in Previous 5 Yrs						
					1 Emp		2 Emps		More Than 2	
	N	n	%	N	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	248	165	67	247	85	34	61	25	101	41
No	720	400	56	709	381	54	86	12	78	11
All employed respondents	968	565	58	956	466	49	147	15	179	19

The relationship between "job stability" and attitude towards adult classes was further specified when "job stability" was cross-referenced with the respondents' "interest in particular adult class subjects." As indicated in Table 46 the respondents with more than two employers in the previous five years were more likely to express an interest in basic education subjects while the respondents who have had the same employer were more likely to state that they

were not interested in any of the adult class subjects. The results presented in Tables 45 and 46 suggest that the tension associated with job transience manifested itself in increased motivation to enroll in adult basic education.

TABLE 46

INTEREST IN ADULT CLASS SUBJECTS
(BY JOB STABILITY)

Adult Class Subject	Number of Employers in the Previous Five Years						
		1 Emp		2 Emps		More Than 2	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%
Basic education	211	100	47	36	17	75	36
Vocational education	381	205	54	83	22	93	24
Liberal education	153	100	65	25	16	28	18
Nothing	163	118	72	26	16	19	12
All subject categories	956	523	55	170	18	159	17

6. Income and intent to enroll in adult classes

As indicated in Table 47 the association between "income" and "intent to enroll in an adult class" was affected by the introduction of "age" as a test variable. That is for the 16-45 year age category, intent to enroll in adult classes peaks at the second lowest income level and diminishes as the income level rises. On the other hand, for the respondents aged 46-65 intent to enroll in adult classes peaks at the highest income range and diminishes as the income level falls. These data would seem to contradict the maxim that education is more positively perceived as income rises.

TABLE 47

INTENT TO ENROLL IN AN ADULT CLASS (BY AGE AND INCOME)
(N = 1325)

Age Range	Income Levels														
	Less Than $4,000			$4-8,999			$9-14,999			$15-25,000			$25,000+		
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
16-25	22	7	32	72	44	61	62	26	42	80	42	53	30	16	53
26-45	14	6	43	54	21	39	81	28	23	88	18	16	41	17	7
46-65	45	2	4	93	6	5	114	9	8	84	10	12	48	8	17
66+	144	3	2	184	8	4	56	0	0	10	2	20	3	0	0
All ages . . .	225	18	8	403	79	20	313	73	23	262	72	27	122	41	34

CHAPTER V

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

1. The results of the Wisconsin Educational Needs Assessment Survey indicated that the 16-25 year old age range is the most cost effective target for ABE recruitment and programming. There are a number of factors that support this conclusion. First, about 19% of the respondents were in the 16-25 age range which was about twice the percentage for older cohorts in any ten year age span. This statistic reflects the growing number of high school non-completors in the state. Second, about 58% of ABE participants are in this age range as compared to 9% who are over age 45. Third, a significantly higher percentage than in any other age category perceived education as being helpful in their lives, with 75% stating that adult classes would be helpful as compared to 27% of those over 65. Fourth, when this cohort was asked to list the subjects that they would like to learn if they were to take an adult class, the basic skills of reading/grammar and arithmetic were most often selected, whereas the older age clusters preferred vocational or liberal arts subjects. In order to adjust ABE recruitment and programming to the needs of this age range (16-25), the following program changes are recommended:

   (a) The data indicated that the major barrier to participation for the younger adult is not perceived weaknesses in programming but rather competing demands on their time. To help overcome this barrier, ABE should adopt a more flexible instructional approach. This would include night and weekend classes, year-long enrollment, and alternatives to in-class instruction such as instruction on television, in the home, or at work.

(b) Teachers in ABE must be able to understand the needs of young adult learners. A teacher who is accustomed to working with students in their mid-twenties and thirties could expect to face a completely different set of contingencies than working with a 19-year-old who has recently left high school. An in-service program designed to help the ABE teachers better communicate with the younger learner could act to minimize this problem and subsequently maximize retention and effectiveness.

(c) If ABE is to meet the needs of this age group, then it must place more emphasis in its programming on preparation for high school equivalency. About 90% of the younger age cohorts have an educational attainment of grades 9-11. Even if it is assumed that they have lost some of their skills since leaving school, upper-level basic skill instruction and eventually high school equivalency are still a primary concern.

(d) The data suggested that the time is right to exchange program, recruiting and teaching data among public employees whose goals, particularly for the 16-19 year old adults, are or should be similar. An effort should be made to develop an integrated ABE-GED programming relationship with the high schools in each V.T.A.E.* attendance area. ABE programs can provide a personal and flexible structure for young adult high school non-completors, while the high schools represent a primary referral source for alternative forms of education, including ABE. In this way a channel from high school non-completion to V.T.A.E. enrollment and attendance without a high school diploma can be developed. A beginning to this has been made with the Wisconsin Basic Skills Joint Task Force; high schools, V.T.A.E. districts, State Board of V.T.A.E., and the Department of Public Instruction should be encouraged to move to action as soon as possible.

*Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) system

2. The elderly represent a unique sub-group of the ABE eligible population. The needs assessment indicated that 31% of the respondents were over 65 years of age. (See Table 3.) While this cohort did not express career related needs for Adult Basic Education as did other populations (see Table 34), their survival and coping needs in a modern and rapidly changing technological society may be greater than for any other age group. If the ABE program chooses to expand the participation of older adults, then cooperation with religious institutions in the community may be the most effective channel. This is evidenced in the needs assessment data where 84% of the respondents who were over 65 years of age stated that they belong to a church. This result suggests that the church is the logical choice for recruitment efforts as well as a possible location for basic education for older adults. In this way recruiting and programming could be combined and cooperation with religious institutions developed beyond the present status.

3. The data indicated that television is an important part of the non-high school graduate's lifestyle. About half of the respondents stated that they watch three or more hours of television a night and less than 6% stated that they do not watch television at all (see Table 12). On the other hand, 50% of the respondents stated that they do not watch the Public Broadcasting System television channel. The relative success of the Kentucky Educational Television GED series, in spite of its airing on the public network, suggests that, if programmed on commercial television, it would have even greater impact. It is therefore recommended that greater use of commercial television for recruitment and programming in ABE be considered. Pilot programs should be developed to demonstrate the ways that

ABE recruitment and programming could be provided on both public and commercial television. Scheduling a series on cable TV should also not be overlooked.

4. When asked for the subjects that the respondents would like to learn in an adult class, the basic skills of reading, grammar and arithmentic were often selected (see Table 31). These results suggest that the ABE program's concentration on basic skills does fit the needs of potential clientele and should be continued. One exception concerned unemployed respondents who are actively searching work. In the Wisconsin study this group expressed a dual interest in basics and the vocational subjects. It is recommended that ABE coordinate its programming with vocational education to an even greater extent than in the past so that students have the opportunity to take simultaneous classes in both basic education and the vocational program of their choice.

5. The needs assessment data indicated that the respondents place a high priority on family and friends in many aspects of their life. It is recommended that the ABE program consider the utilization of family and friends in an expanded paraprofessional role in ABE. The data have demonstrated that respondents are more likely to turn to this group when encountering difficulty in such things as completing various forms. There is no reason why this informal educational role for family and friends could not be integrated into ABE instruction as well. This is especially true of the lower levels of ABE instruction, inclusive of basic literacy, where the student requires a maximum amount of personal contact and one-to-one instruction. Family and friends, as well as a cadre of volunteer tutors from the community, could be used to augment ABE instruction

with little additional program cost. Of particular value would be to seek volunteer tutors from among the more literate retired adults.

6. The respondents were asked a series of questions which concerned their reading habits. The answers given have implications for the use of reading materials in ABE. The most widely read materials were newspapers, books, and magazines, all with over 85% readership. These data suggest that these three types of reading materials should be used as a learning resource in ABE. The respondents were also asked to assess the degree of difficulty of these materials. Of the three, newspapers emerged as the most promising instructional resource, because any single newspaper has several levels of reading difficulty. In the needs assessment editorials were perceived as the most difficult to read, followed by news articles, sports and the comics. This spectrum of reading difficulty is further enhanced if one includes other aspects of the newspaper such as features, want ads, food ads, the T.V. section, and various word games. By adjusting the sections of the newspaper that are assigned to be read, the ABE teacher can provide the student with reading materials that are commensurate with his/her reading proficiency and close to personal reading inclinations. Magazines, although not as cost-effective as the newspaper, also have potential as a learning resource. In this case, varying the degree of difficulty could be accomplished through the use of several different magazines. Books were judged by the respondents as being the most difficult to read of the three materials. When this result is coupled with book length, it suggests that books (except those specifically designed for sequential reading development) should be used with more advanced ABE readers. Nevertheless, within this context carefully selected books can be used as a successful learning resource for any level in ABE.

7. The respondents were asked questions concerning the difficulties they encounter in filling out forms. When asked to name specific forms that they experienced difficulty in completing, tax forms were most often checked. Other forms that were also cited were medical, insurance, social security, legal, and job applications. The difficulty that the respondents have with forms suggests that completing them in class would be a motivating and valuable experience. It is recommended that ABE develop instructional units in the completion of various forms that adult learners are likely to encounter, be it job applications, income tax, or medical. The ABE teacher could provide valuable assistance in the basic education skills necessary to complete any of the forms to which the sample responded.

8. The data indicated that marketing decisions in ABE would be more cost effective if tailored to needs of specific sub-groups within the eligible population. Statistically significant differences were obtained in how the respondents found out about ABE, for differing age categories, ethnic backgrounds, formal educational attainment, population of home community, and sex. An increased sophistication of marketing strategies should be developed to aid in maximizing ABE participation.

9. Wisconsin has a variety of ethnic population groups which in some cases do not speak or write the English language. Such ethnic groups include but are not limited to Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. The needs assessment data indicated that minorities placed more importance on learning basic skills than other respondents. Given this stronger motivation, it is logical to assume that these groups would attend ABE in larger numbers. Statistics on ABE participants showed that Blacks and Native Americans are participating at about three times their proportion of the ABE eligible population, and Hispanics and Asians are participating at over ten times

their proportion (see Table 5). Furthermore, the data received from the Resettlement Office on the Indochinese population in the state indicates that the participation in ABE by minority and ethnic groups is likely to increase. As of September, 1981, (10,121) Indochinese refugees were settled in Wisconsin. The recent Cuban refugee arrival has further impacted on the ABE program. In the light of a predicted increase in participation in ABE by minority and ethnic groups, it is recommended that the ABE program continue to adapt programs to special groups in need of instruction in the basics including a comprehensive program in English language skills.

Discussion

The number of persons 16 years of age and older who have not graduated from and are not attending high school is far in excess of ABE enrollments. Statistics show that about 4% of the eligible population attend ABE programs nationally with the statistics for Wisconsin being about 3%. There has been much speculation concerning reasons for this low percentage. Discussion has often centered around perceived inadequacies in ABE programming and recruitment (Mezirow, Griffith, Kent, etc.) The Wisconsin Educational Needs Assessment project was designed in part to respond to this criticism by providing data which would help ABE planners to develop programs which would attract and retain a broader spectrum of high school non-completors.

The first step in program planning is to construct a precise definition of the relationship of the program to its clientele. The results of the Wisconsin study indicated that the relationship between the ABE program and its clientele is complex and not subject to simplistic interpretation. It was found that the non-high school graduate population perceived basic skill acquisition within a broader context of educational needs and goals. It was also found that while part of the reason a larger percentage of the eligible population does not

participate in the ABE program may be traced to programming and recruitment, this is not a complete picture. The problem does not lie solely with recruitment; 55% of the respondents had heard of adult classes being offered in their community and 48% stated that they would consider taking an adult class in the future. The problem does not lie solely with programming; 52% of the respondents stated that adult classes would be helpful to them and the basic skills of reading/grammar and arithmetic were often selected as what the respondents would like to learn if they were to take an adult class. These data clearly indicated that there is knowledge of, and interest in, the present ABE program in Wisconsin. Therefore, it can be assumed that there are factors other than programming and recruitment that also act as barriers to participation. The needs assessment included several questions that focused on reasons for attendance and non-attendance, and the data obtained proved to be informative.

The results indicated several factors that significantly reduce the percentage of the eligible population likely to attend the ABE program. The first factor, and one that has been discussed extensively in the presentation of the needs assessment results, concerns the effect of age on ABE participation. The needs assessment data indicated that the likelihood of participation declines markedly with age. Thus, the 16-35 year age cohort comprises 27% of the ABE eligible population, but 81% of ABE participants. On the other hand, those over 65 comprise 31% of the eligible population but only 1% of the participants. Moreover, while no significant differences were found in basic skill levels or knowledge about adult classes among different age clusters, younger respondents were far more likely than older respondents to want to correct basic skill deficiencies, to believe that adult classes would be helpful, and to intend to enroll in an adult class. Given the respondents' own assessment of their educational needs and goals in relation to ABE, it can be

concluded that the low rate of participation by older adults is more attributable to an absence of belief in the benefit of formal education than the effectiveness of present programming and recruitment strategies. Certainly the societal myth that formal education is primarily for the young must also be seen as a contributing factor. Deeply ingrained societal and personal beliefs about the role of education are not likely to be substantially influenced by traditional methods of programming and recruitment in ABE.

While the data indicated that older adults have little motivation to attend the ABE program as a sole educational pursuit, there was some interest in liberal education programs. Possibly the most cost effective strategy for reaching the basic education needs of this cohort lies in cooperation by ABE with other programs of continuing education for older adults. There are already a number of successful programs of this kind that have been established in various parts of the country. These programs, conducted in schools, churches, community centers, etc., have attracted a growing number of participants. There is no reason why basic education should not be offered as a normal component in the curriculum in these various settings. Basic education instruction could serve to enhance understanding of other liberal adult education subjects as well as act to improve day-to-day functioning in a complex world. More importantly, these programs have developed an impressive array of support services for older adults including counseling, personal recruitment, transportation, and various forms of financial assistance. In general, it would seem to be more cost effective for the ABE program to "plug into" these services instead of trying to duplicate each within the ABE program.

A second factor that influences attendance patterns also concerns fundamental differences in educational needs and goals of the respondent groups. The needs assessment indicated that two conditions had to be met before there was interest in basic education. One, there had to be a perception of

basic skill deficiencies, and two, this perception had to be accompanied by a strong desire or motivation to correct this deficiency. The legal definition of the eligible population (those without high school graduation) has established somewhat arbitrary parameters that include many individuals who do not meet one or both of these criteria. The particular sector of the eligible population to which attention is now focused are those who expressed an interest in various adult education programs but expressed little or no interest in basic skill acquisition by itself.

As alluded to previously, the direction that interest in education was likely to take was highly dependent upon age. For the younger respondents, adult education was primarily viewed as a means to improve economic status. The primary educational interest of this cohort was most often directed toward vocationally oriented programs. The younger respondents who showed an interest in ABE were interested in high school equivalency as well. In essence, younger respondents tended to view ABE/GED as part of a vocational training strategy and not as a separate educational endeavor.

The older respondents, on the other hand, evidenced less interest in the economic returns of education. This cohort was more likely to view basic education in the classic adult education perspective, as a self improvement strategy. While this group was motivated to improve basic education skills, they were not motivated to the point of establishing this area as their number one educational priority.

The needs assessment gave evidence that many of the respondents in both of the above groups had in fact participated in adult classes where basic educational skills are considered to be a prerequisite. This finding underscores the fact that the boundaries between the ABE eligible population and the clientele of the other programs of adult education can not be clearly defined. There are many instances when those attending ABE programs, or with basic skill

deficiencies, would benefit by a curriculum that featured cooperative linkages with programs of vocational and/or liberal education. Conversely, there are many students in vocational and liberal education programs who would benefit by a renewed emphasis on basic education skills. Recent results from competency based testing of graduating high school seniors gives evidence that there are a growing number of high school graduates who have serious basic skill deficiencies. While it is highly improbable that this cluster will attend the ABE program as presently constituted, it is not unreasonable to expect their participation in basic skills or "developmental" education, because success in vocational and liberal arts education is dependent upon basic skills.

In short, an essential finding of the educational needs assessment project was that the non-attending population tended to perceive basic skill acquisition within a broader context of educational needs and goals, much as education itself was viewed within the broader context of life needs and goals. There was an identifiable sector of the eligible population whose needs could be best served by basic education instruction separated from other adult and continuing education programs. This sector comprised the majority of present ABE participants. The recommendations listed earlier are designed to maximize the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of this group. In addition to the ABE participant sector there were others of the eligible population who evidenced a greater interest in other types of adult education programs, with this interest dependent upon age as well as educational needs and goals, but not necessarily educational attainment. The needs assessment gave evidence that the basic education needs of these groups would be best served if basic education instruction were integrated into the curriculum of already existing programs of adult and continuing education.

A third factor that effects attendance patterns also concerns the concept of educational needs and goals, but in a broader sense. Previously, the

discussion focused on the variables that are basic to the decision to attend ABE as opposed to other forms of adult education. Now attention is turned to the variables that affect the decision to participate in any form of adult education. It is assumed by many that education is a good thing and that everyone stands to benefit by participation. The needs assessment data does not challenge the validity of this assumption but the data indicated that there is a significant percentage of the ABE eligible population which perceives itself as functioning adequately without adult education in general and basic education and the high school diploma in particular. In economic terms this group is characterized by high employment, usually in the blue-collar, skilled blue-collar, and craftsman's fields; low job turnover; and relatively high income levels. It is characterized socially by a stable family and friendship pattern, involvement in community affairs, participation in the electoral process, involvement with the public school system for those with school-age children, and enjoyment of reading as a leisure-time pursuit. Yet this relatively high level of social and economic functioning did not necessarily correspond to [illegible]sed interest in adult education.

[illegible]hough this group satisfies the legal criteria for eligibility in the ABE [illegible]ogram, there is little reason to expect their actual attendance. Since they do not perceive themselves as having basic skill deficiencies and are functioning to their satisfaction without a high school diploma, they are not a prime recruitment target. It would not be unrealistic to assume that this group has less to gain from participation in the ABE program than a sizeable percentage of the present high school graduate population.

A fourth factor that effects attendance patterns is an identifiable cluster in the ABE eligible population who perhaps have the greatest need for basic education, but are prevented from attendance by what best can be described as the poverty of life circumstance. This group has been characterized in previous

research by: chronic unemployment or underemployment; inadequate income to meet basic needs (often the product of and a component in broken homes); not involved to any meaningful extent in community affairs; transience; beset by personal problems; and lacking confidence in themselves and their abilities. This sector of the population has received considerable attention in recent years in sociological and political writings. In fact, the ABE program established in the mid 1960s as part of the federally-sponsored anti-poverty program was aimed primarily at this group. The catalyst for the anti-poverty program was supplied by books like Michael Harrington's The Other America which helped to focus national attention upon the "invisible poor." Harrington described this group in the following graphic terms:

> The United States contains an underdeveloped nation, a culture of poverty. Its inhabitants do not suffer the extreme privation of the peasants of Asia or the tribesmen of Africa, yet the mechanism of the misery is similar. They are beyond history, beyond progress, sunk in a paralyzing maiming routine.[9]

In spite of its ambitious goal to rid the nation of poverty, it is generally understood that the "War on Poverty" failed to have a major impact upon "the other America" of which Harrington wrote. The question can also be asked of the ABE program: Has it had a major impact upon those who are least educated and most in need? From what has so far been reported in current studies by Manzo, Mezirow, Shipp, Griffith, Harman and others, it would seem that the ABE program tends to attract those who are most likely to help themselves. As Mezirow wrote in his 1975 study, The Last Gamble on Education, ABE participants are generally those "who are most in tune with middle-class norms and school practice."[10]

While the educational needs assessment data can not speak to factors relevant to the retention of ABE participants, it does have something to say about the likelihood of future enrollment by the non-participating population. The data indicated that educational attainment and income had no consistent

association with intention to enroll in adult classes. In fact when age was introduced as a control, there was a negative association, that is, the 16-45 year old respondents with 0-8 years of formal education or with lower incomes were significantly more interested in ABE than were the 16-45 year old respondents with 9-11 years of formal education or with higher incomes. These findings, when compared to the statistic that individuals in the lowest educational and income categories are under-represented in adult education programs by a factor of two to one, demonstrate that the intention to participate does not translate into actual participation for the least educated and most in need.

Further evidence is provided by the statistics on retention in adult education programs. In his 1977 re-analysis of the N.C.E.S. data on participation in adult education, Froomkin concluded that, while "the delivery of adult education is not as skewed to the rich as is commonly believed,"[11] those adult education participants with lower income levels and with less educational attainment were significantly more likely to drop-out of adult education programs than other participants. Froomkin attributes the higher attrition rate first to the relatively greater number of class sessions the lower income learner needs to be involved in, and second, to factors external to the educational program of economic, social, or psychological nature that make sustained involvement less probable. The latter explanation is perhaps the more pertinent since there seems to be no magic means to hasten the acquisition of basic skills. The ABE program, as presently constituted, focuses <u>almost exclusively</u> upon educational needs. There is a tacit assumption that economic, social and psychological needs are the responsibility of the learner. Yet, as Maslow has pointed out, until these needs are reasonably well satisfied, it is difficult for the individual to make a commitment to long term goals like education. If it is a goal of the ABE program to increase the participation of the least educated and most in need, then the program must be concerned with more than

educational needs. The arbitrary separation between education and the totality of life circumstance acts to exclude many individuals from the learning process.

On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to expect the ABE program to accomplish a major expansion in services within present budget restraints and anticipated budget reductions. Moreover, the ABE program lacks both the expertise, and the experience, to venture too far from the field of basic education instruction. Perhaps the most cost-effective method to serve the needs of this group would be through cooperation with social agencies and community based organizations that have more experience in alleviating economic, social and psychological hardship. It would seem that the primary goal of this cooperative effort should be the evolution of an economically sound and socially interdependent community that can speak to fundamental needs. ABE participation would be but one aspect of this cooperative venture.

To review, the findings of the Wisconsin Educational Needs Assessment project indicated that the ABE eligible population are not monolithic in terms of their need for, and motivation to participate in, the ABE program. This result corroborates the findings of the Sebring and Hanniford study of the ABE program in Pennsylvania and casts further doubt on the use of the variable "high school graduation" as the sole criteria for determining program suitability. As Sebring and Hanniford conclude:

> It is important for program planners to recognize that it is doubtful that a very high proportion of the legally defined target population will ever participate (in the ABE program).[12]

The Wisconsin educational needs assessment identified three variables that significantly effect the likelihood of participation in ABE. They are: a) age, b) perception of basic skill deficiencies relative to the motivation to acquire basic skills; and c) degree of control over life circumstance and fundamental needs. Using these criteria, the sector of the eligible population

most likely to attend the ABE program as presently constituted was identified. This group can be described as 35 years of age and younger; with a perception of basic skill deficiency and the motivation to correct this deficiency; and satisfying economic, social and psychological needs at a minimal level. The recommendations made in the preceding section of this report are primarily directed at maximizing the participation of this group. Nevertheless, it should be noted that those most likely to be influenced by internal changes in recruitment and programming comprise a small minority of the eligible population. A large part of the eligible population does not attend for reasons that go beyond the program's basic education focus. The characteristics of these groups were also identified and recommendations were made by which the likelihood of their participation could be increased. Essentially, these recommendations called for increased cooperation between ABE and other educational programs, social agencies, and community groups to expand the program focus beyond basic skill acquisition. Specifically, three populations were identified that would benefit most by this cooperation: 1) older adults; 2) those lacking motivation to correct basic skill deficiencies per se but with strong interest in other forms of adult education; and 3) those with motivation to correct basic skill deficiencies, but with unfulfilled economic, social and psychological needs that make a commitment to long-term goals like education difficult.

In the case of the first two groups, it was suggested that ABE cooperate with other programs of vocational and liberal adult education in order to integrate basic skill instruction into the framework of their continuing education programs. The needs assessment data indicated that while it is unlikely that a large percentage of either of these groups would attend the ABE program as a sole educational pursuit, it can be expected that they would become more

involved in ABE if this instruction were integrated into the vocational or liberal adult education curriculum that represents their primary educational interest.

In the case of the third group, often referred to as "the least educated and most in need," it was suggested that ABE cooperate with those social programs and community-based organizations whose primary goal is the alleviation of fundamental economic, social and psychological hardship. It can be expected that the attendance of this group will not likely increase until these needs are minimally satisfied. While it is unrealistic to expect the ABE program to accomplish both its academic skill mission and a human survival mission, it can cooperate with agencies dealing with the most fundamental of human needs and tie academic programming to them.

SUMMARY

The findings of the Wisconsin Educational Needs Assessment project were used to prioritize the eligible population in terms of its receptiveness to programming and recruitment in ABE. The needs assessment first identified the sector of the eligible population in Wisconsin most likely to participate in the ABE program and outlined a series of recommendations designed to maximize their involvement. While this cluster was given a primary target status, recommendations were also made to help extend basic education instruction to other sectors of the eligible population. These recommendations focused upon increased cooperation by the ABE program with other educational programs, social agencies, and community groups. The rational behind this eclectic approach is not that the ABE program is incapable of meeting the needs of the total eligible population, but rather that the program can not realistically be expected to be "all things to all people" with present budget constraints. The needs assessment data seriously challenges the belief that the eligible

population is a uni-dimensional whole whose primary need in life is the correction of basic skill deficiencies. Cooperation with other adult programs, social agencies, and community groups holds the key to reaching the broadest range of the eligible population without a significant increase in funding. In turn, the key to successful cooperation lies in the coordination of basic skill acquisition with the satisfaction of more primary life goals.

FOOTNOTES

1. Indicators of Trends in American Education, Russell Sage Foundation, 1969, p. 3.

2. "A History of the Adult Education Act," National Advisory Council on Adult Education, Washington D.C., 1980, p. 14.

3. Current Population Report Series No. 92, 1977, p. 60.

4. Data supplied by Wisconsin Board of Vocational Technical and Adult Education from Charlotte Martin.

5. Ibid, Charlotte Martin.

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7. Social Indicators, Raymond Bauer editor, Chapter 2 "Social Indicators and Goals, Albert Biderman, M.I.T. Press, Boston, Mass., 1967.

8. Morris Rosenberg, The Logic of Survey Analysis, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968, p. 24.

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10. Michael Harrington, The Other America, Penguin Books, Baltimore 1955, p. 155.

11. "Last Gamble on Education: The Dynamics of ABE," 1975, ED 112 119, p. 54.

12. Joseph Froomkin, "Adult Education 1972, A Re-Analysis of N.C.E.S. Data," Washington D.C. Educational Policy Research Center, 1977, p. 17.

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